

To: Chairman Crawford and Members of the Regulatory Reform Committee

RE: HB 4561

I am writing as the President of the Michigan Chapter of the International Association of Electrical Inspectors (IAEI) to express serious concerns with the above proposed bill.

HB 4561 is a bill to amend the Stille-DeRossett Construction Act (PA 230) in three (3) important ways: one would change our State's current "Code-change cycle" from three (3) years to six (6) years, one would eliminate the adoption of Codes "by reference", and the third would alter existing language on cost/benefit analysis of safety changes to "eliminate changes that would tend to raise construction costs"

The IAEI believes that HB 4561 as proposed is bad business for Michigan. While the intended purpose of the bill seems to be to lower costs associated with administration/enforcement of Codes, there are several other factors which must be considered.

From a technological perspective, we do not favor our State by creating delays in keeping our Codes and standards up to date. Michigan is a state attempting to transform itself from a waning rustbelt economy toward a newer high-tech based one. Building further delays into Code adoption creates needless obstacles to the spread of new building technologies. LED lighting, Solar photo-voltaic inverters, low-voltage fluorescent fixtures, Electric Vehicle Charging systems, wind turbines *ALL* are technologies which scarcely existed six years ago and which are now important aspects of building technology. All are also the focus of Code changes either in the current model Codes or in the upcoming cycle

All of these technologies and more are currently the focus of research and production facilities in Michigan. Absent a national model Code with which to evaluate the building applications arising from these new technologies, local authorities will be severely hamstrung in approving what could be tremendous energy saving (and therefore moneysaving) technical initiatives.

Imagine the impact on our State when a technological innovation invented in 2011 could not be utilized in Michigan because of a **proposed SIX year Code approval cycle**. When acceptance of innovation is delayed, production is curtailed, with the consequent loss of jobs and tax revenue.

Also significant is the notion in the proposed HB 4561 that Code changes that “tend to increase construction costs” should be “eliminated”. How is this to be measured? Code changes invariably result in a safer built environment. Ground-Fault circuit interrupters, the requirements for various “fire-rated” building structures, backflow preventer requirements in plumbing systems, flame- safe mechanical systems... all initially added to construction costs until market forces made the changes cost-neutral. Adapting the latest safety measures in construction is the surest way to carry out the intent of PA 230:” ...the health, safety and welfare of occupants and users of buildings and structures....”

A reasonable comparison can be made with safety –related advances in the automotive industry. Can there be any doubt today that seat belts, shoulder belts, and air bags have added significantly to the safety of vehicle drivers and occupants? Each one of these advances brought the same cries of “Too expensive “and “over-regulated”. The associated costs seem as nothing today when compared with the increase in safety

Updating our building codes does indeed create some additional costs for municipalities. Those costs can be easily mitigated by cooperative purchasing and low-cost training available from various professional organizations. In addition, the State of Michigan could roll back the recent 600% increase in inspector training class approval fees, which would further reduce municipal training costs.

Also, it must be said that the simple act of eliminating the existing Michigan Residential Code would bring great savings to the State, to local municipalities and to contractors. The Michigan residential Code is a free standing document that applies only to one and two-family dwellings, mirrors existing model Codes, and carries additional costs in development, purchase and enforcement.

In the larger picture, *NOT* updating our Code to the latest model codes available inevitably leads to higher costs for business, designers and entrepreneurs. Ironically, this will then lead to even higher costs to municipalities as they struggle to make decisions on various products and technologies not yet evaluated in what could be six- year old code books.

HB 4561 would also end the practice of adopting a model code in Michigan “by reference”. Adoption “by reference” allows Michigan to take advantage of the expertise of thousands of professionals involved in the development of the “model” codes: Building Code, Electrical Code, Mechanical Code and Plumbing Code. These model codes are all consensus –based, updated continuously, and represent the most advanced thinking on a national scale. Proposed HB 4561 would instead opt for a process wherein Michigan would evaluate each Code, section by section for application in Michigan. It’s difficult to imagine a more burdensome bureaucratic process.

The International Association of Electrical Inspectors urges your Committee to reject the changes to PA 230 proposed by HB 4561. Instead, we urge the Committee to develop legislation comprising two (2) simple steps toward a cheaper and more effective regulatory process: 1) adopt the national "model" Codes by reference when they are published, 2) eliminate the onerous Michigan Residential Code. We believe that legislation encompassing these two steps will aid in moving our State toward a high tech future and away from the "over-regulated," anti-technology present as represented by HB 4561

Respectfully,

Phil Clark, President

Michigan Chapter

International Association of Electrical Inspectors